

OUR SOCIAL CHAT

All letters intended for this department should be addressed to "Aunt Jennie," care of The Progressive Farmer, Raleigh, N. C.

Aunt Jennie's Letter.

What a bright beautiful morning and how I should enjoy fishing to-day with a party of friends! But alas! I am in the city and the river is miles distant. Happiness' letter caused this longing for out-door life. We have our flowers, but they, too, must grow in conventional beds or in prim little pots, and our birds must sing behind the bars of some cruel old cage. Even our water must be paid for, and sometimes I feel grateful that we can breathe a long, full breath of pure, sweet invigorating air without extra pay for the pleasure afforded us. Had I been reared in a city, perhaps things would seem different, but having once realized the delights of country life causes at times an impressible longing to roam again amid the forests and fields and be free—away from the habitations of man, or at least far enough away to throw off all conventionalities and hear the pulsating of nature's great heart and listen to the whisperings of the pines.

'Tis well for man to be associated with his fellows, but to forsake all solitude is to forget how wonderful is nature and thrust God in a corner to be partially viewed on Sunday perhaps, and forgotten the rest of the week. A man or woman who is perpetually busy, whose every moment must count for dollars or cents, has little time for contemplation and must needs forget self in the struggle, and forgetting self, he thinks little of his fellow-man. Many men have degenerated and are now simply machines, thinking little and caring less for all save the office and the magic of dollars.

Is this right? Have they no responsibilities as men? Can it be possible that they believe that they were created for no higher purpose than to turn that same old wheel year in and year out, eat three meals a day, sleep soundly at night, and let this old world with its freight of human souls jog on to destruction, if it will, and pay no heed to its going? How can they be so blind when so much depends on their seeing and feeling an interest in things surrounding them? Some one has suggested that selfishness prompts them in the beginning and then gives place to stolid indifference. This may be true, for selfishness can do wonders with us if we do not chafe at the bit and refuse to wear the bridle.

Our letters are good this week. Let us hear from you. AUNT JENNIE.

True Friendship.

Dear Aunt Jennie:—While visiting some friends in Onslow County three weeks ago I saw The Progressive Farmer and enjoyed reading it very much. I also saw the two dear Chatterers—Rebecca and Sister Kate. They are two very sweet ladies. I also noticed that one sister in the Social Chat signed her name Patience. I like the name. I wonder how many of us have patience in times of troubles, and how many of us young people have the patience to persuade our little sisters or brothers to do right instead of scolding to make them do to please us? How many teach the little ones their prayers at night and of the glory of heaven and the horror of sin; and how many of us take the time at night to help the little ones to get their lessons instead of letting them study until their little minds are tired and their heads ache?

There are but few that realize the meaning of Patience, Duty and Friendship. I sometimes think if we had more patience, and tried harder to do our duty, and would be more friendly, we shouldn't have as many enemies, and there might be more souls saved. It is our duty to do everything that is right, and it is right to do everything good that is in our power. We do not often find

anything in life that is really more beautiful than real, true, unmeasured friendship. The word friend is often used when "acquaintance" would sound far better. Most of us can number our acquaintances by the score, but how many of us can say we have a dozen true friends?

Friendship is an oft-abused and much-misplaced word. When we would know who our real, true friends are, we should not undertake to number them when we are enjoying prosperity and know nothing of want, because should we at such a time make the attempt to ascertain the number of our friends we may make the sad mistake of counting even those who are our enemies, among those whom we think are our surest friends, so hard is it at times to discriminate one from the other, not withstanding the vastness of the real difference between them. A person who has money and pleasant surroundings and occupies a high position in life and society is never apparently wanting for any number of friends, friends who would do anything for him or her; friends who can never do enough to show their love and esteem. But let this same person who is blest by such a multitude of friends (?) be overtaken by misfortunes, let his fortune be swept away and let him be left a penniless man in the world—then look and lo! where are those hosts of friends, those who flocked around him so short a time ago offering such a glad and willing service? Last week, last month or a year ago when he was enjoying the good things of the world to so large a measure and counted himself as wanting nothing, his friends were oh, so numerous, so ready to give him any help, so full of praise and adoration for him; but now where are those dear friends? He wants them now; he would be glad of a hearty welcome, a kind word, a friendly handshake, and few words of sympathy and encouragement. But where is he to go to find any of these that his very heart and soul are so yearning for?

Perhaps out of that large number of so-called friends there are now in his days of misfortune and want only one or two who are as ready to give him assistance, to offer him a friendly hand and say as warmly and readily as in those other days, "My friend." Who will say those two are not worth more to him now than all those others who were so profuse with their greetings before, but who pass by him now with only a slight and cold inclination of the head?

We have all heard the old saying: a friend in need is a friend indeed, but perhaps few of us ever appreciate how true is this old saying! So if we wish to know who our friends are, let us number them in the time of our troubles and hardships, for at no other time can we be sure of who they are, and when we are once sure we have a friend, let us value that friendship, for it is worth more to us than we can tell.

Yours truly,

CAPITOLA SILVERPEN.

Carteret Co., N. C.

A Little Talk About Reading.

Dear Aunt Jennie:—The realm of literature is too wide for most of us to hope to know it very thoroughly; but I can conceive of no excuse for any person who can read at all, yet who chooses to remain totally ignorant of the best books. Did you ever notice in a company discussing books someone who remained hopelessly silent and plainly uncomfortable? Did you not almost unconsciously pity that person? Yet this embarrassment when with better informed people is one of the little things of the case. If you can imagine what your life would be if the memory of all the books you have read and loved was blotted out, you can realize something of what he has missed.

Yet how many are doing this thing solely because they choose to do so. I know young men and women who consider themselves accomplished yet they know practically nothing of Scott or

Irving, Emerson or Milton, Shakespeare or the Bible. It may be surprising to hear that there are supposedly educated people who are unacquainted with the Bible; but anyone who will investigate the matter will find this to be the case. Think of what that person has lost who has not thought it worth while to read the story of Joseph or Ruth or Jesus.

It is bad enough to be ignorant of Longfellow or Tennyson; but not to know Isaiah or Job is inexcusable. The man or woman who is not familiar with Bible stories and Bible teachings is certainly to be pitied. For the Bible is not only the basis of our religion, but has for centuries been so interwoven with literature and laws, customs and manners of speech that it is an essential part of every phase of our life. Like the force of gravitation, its influence is ever present and ever active. Yet there are people who have chosen to grow up so ignorant of it that they could not tell whether it was Samuel or Solomon who killed Goliath, or just what Samson had to do with the fall of the walls of Jericho.

If I might presume to give advice to parents and teachers I would say: "See that for the children under your care access to the world of books is made easy and pleasant. Let them know the Arabian Nights and Robinson Crusoe, Hawthorne and Dickens and Uncle Remus, and be sure that he learns about Moses and Daniel; for beyond the gates of literature lies the golden land of happy dreams and wonderful fancies and noble ambitions."

So to the young man or woman who does not like to read I would say: "You know not what you are missing. Take up your Bible and see if you can't find something interesting; before you have exhausted it, you will have learned to appreciate Whittier and Longfellow, Tennyson and Milton and all that goodly company into whose works it has entered so largely." E.

Hamblen Co., Tenn.

From a Burke County Farm.

Dear Aunt Jennie:—I am sitting by a good fire this the 18th of April. We had a heavy frost yesterday morning; I fear the fruit is all killed. The poplar trees were looking beautiful, but their green is turned to brown. Tomatoes and cabbage plants were frozen. I had not set out any, so mine escaped. I am sorry for those who lost theirs.

I went fishing to-day; had fine sport; every fish I caught fell back in the water. I am going to try again to-morrow. I hope to get some, as I am going to the river.

I have been very busy planting out flowers and shrubbery as it is a new home we have moved to. I planted flower-seed to-day. I know I am late about it, but I thought the weather too cold to plant any sooner. I read the articles on beautifying the homes. It was just what the farmers needed. If it were not for the farmers' wives and daughters the farms would be desolate places. I passed a house not long since; the building was a good one, but there were rags in the front yard, rags in the back yard and everywhere else I think, even hanging on the telephone wire along the big road in front of the house. Well, I thought that farm could be called Ragtown. We call our farm Hollybrook, as there are so many beautiful holly trees along the creek. I think every farmer should call his farm by some pretty name.

I have been in the woods to-day hunting wild flowers. I found a quantity of trailing arbutus; it is so pretty and very fragrant. I found heart leaves with the pretty little pitchers at the roots. There was a vine with brown flowers but no leaves. I do not know it by name, and was afraid to touch it for fear of poison.

We have rural free delivery now; it brings our mail to our door once a day. It certainly is an improvement on going to town once a week to get our mail in busy times with farmers. I hope we shall have a telephone before many years roll by.

HAPPINESS.

Burke Co., N. C.